

## Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

### **Listing of Claims:**

- 1-11. (cancelled).
12. (currently amended): A method for fabricating a semiconductor device, comprising:
  - forming a contact hole in an organic insulating layer using a patterned resist layer formed over the organic insulating layer as a mask; and
  - ashing the patterned resist layer by a plasma treatment ~~in the absence of fluorine and in the presence of a mixed gas containing~~ consisting of nitrogen, oxygen and hydrogen, and forming a protective film on a surface of the contact hole during said ashing, wherein the protective film is formed by reacting the organic insulating layer with the nitrogen.
13. (currently amended): A method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the mixed gas ~~is~~ consists of O<sub>2</sub>+N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub>.
14. (currently amended): A method for fabricating a semiconductor device, comprising:
  - forming an organic spin-on-glass (SOG) film over an interconnect layer;
  - forming a contact hole in the organic SOG insulating layer so as to expose the interconnect layer using a patterned resist layer formed over the organic SOG insulating layer as a mask; and
  - ashing the patterned resist layer by a plasma treatment ~~in the absence of fluorine and in the presence of a mixed gas containing~~ consisting of nitrogen, oxygen and hydrogen, and forming a protective film on a surface of the contact

hole during said ashing, wherein the protective film is formed by reacting the organic SOG insulating layer with the nitrogen.

15. (original): The method as claimed in claim 14, wherein a material of the organic SOG layer is obtained by adding an alkyl group to a silicon oxide.

16. (currently amended): A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the mixed gas ~~is~~ consists of O<sub>2</sub>+N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub>.

17. (currently amended): A method as claimed in claim 14, wherein the mixed gas ~~is~~ consists of O<sub>2</sub>+N<sub>2</sub>H<sub>2</sub>.